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German Wedding Lore & Traditions



From [Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:List_of_Indian_films).

It is bad luck to try on someone else's crown, or take her own off before midnight, when it is replaced by a bonnet. The bridegroom, best man, and bridesmaids then dance around the blindfolded bride. She must catch a bridesmaid (the next to marry). Married women then tie the bridal bonnet on this maid, who must dance with all the bridegroom's male relatives around three lit candles on the floor. If they are not extinguished by the end of dancing, the marriage will be smooth.

[illegible]

→ HONEYMOON DEALS



At the newlywed home, the couple share a bite of bread, symbolizing they never will be short of food. In some regions, the bride is pushed into the kitchen at once, as a housewife, she must first put salt in the soup. A more common tradition among newlyweds involves the groom carrying the bride across the threshold of their home.

Wedding Attire

The bride may wear an heirloom gown, or one from an older sister or her mother, or purchase a new gown. Each has her own elaborate wedding crown constructed of wire, tinsel, artificial flowers, pearls, ribbon and pins. Young girls wear wreaths made of fresh flowers if they are pages in the ceremony. One reader mentioned that she was a flower girl for a wedding in the Black Forest region. The flowers in her basket were lily of the valley, an extremely popular flower at weddings, ranking second after the rose in traditional weddings. Orchids are most popular in modern weddings.

A Civil Ceremony

In Germany there is a large difference between a civil and a religious wedding. A religious wedding can only take place if you have had a civil ceremony at the Registry office. Civil wedding ceremonies are only possible inside the Registry office, and religious weddings can normally only be celebrated inside churches. The majority of Germans marry in civil ceremonies. It is celebrated under the premise that at least one person (bride or groom) is a (temporary) resident in Germany. The registration is done, in most cases, at the Standesamt in the city or town hall, or in a smaller town, at the police station. The non-resident may need to gather the required paperwork and obtain affidavits from a consulate or embassy. This can also mean that you stay in a hotel or private house and register your presence at the police. This address must exist at least 3 weeks before the wedding. A civil wedding may be held a few days before the religious wedding.

Due to an old law in Germany, the application for the marriage license usually must be hung out at a public building for at least one week so that the general public is informed - *Anschlag*. Non-residents can make other arrangements through an international registry office (only four).

After the civil ceremony, the couple is joined by a number of friends and family (including those who witnessed the ceremony) and toasted with champagne. They then go to lunch.

A Religious Wedding

A religious wedding can only take place if you have had a civil ceremony at the Registry office. No minister is allowed to perform civil weddings. Civil wedding ceremonies are only possible inside the Registry office, and religious weddings can normally only be celebrated inside churches. In earlier years, a horse-drawn carriage with black horses transported the bridal couple to and from the church. Today, limousines and full sized cars are used.

On the wedding morning, a breakfast called 'morning soup' or 'bridal soup' is served for the guests. Most



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weddings are held in the late morning. The groom calls for his bride (who may be hidden for him to find) and drives her to the church.

Guests usually seat themselves. There are no groomsmen or ushers. Usually the first pews are reserved for the family.

The children walk as pages, little girls wear fresh flowered wreaths.

In many parts of Germany, when the priest joins the hands of the couple, the bride tries, in a literal sense, to get the upper hand. The bridegroom tries to do the same, and often a struggle of hands ensues, which is sometimes settled by the priest placing the man's hand uppermost.

One of the pair, generally the bride, also tries for the same purpose to put her foot on top of the groom's shoe. When the couple kneels during the ceremony, the groom may kneel on the hem of the bride's gown, to symbolize he will keep her in order. The bride may step on his foot when she rises, to assert herself.

Guests may be invited to the couple's home, a banquet hall or country mansion for a reception. Champagne, white wine or schnapps may be served at the reception.

Resources and References

Special Thanks to [Lois Pearce, Master Bridal Consultant](#) of Hamden, Connecticut, for her time and energy gathering the majority of information used here. We also wish to thank the [Association of Bridal Consultants](#) for their assistance. Please note: The information contained in this category should be considered general in nature. We believe it to be true and an accurate representation of some of the customs and traditions for this country or religion. Information provided by individuals and organizations is assumed to be correct.

You are welcome to write or email us at liza@wdweb.com with any suggestions for changes, additions and deletions. Please direct correspondence to

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Weddings by Elaine, Elaine Parker

Multimedia Microsoft Encarta, 1994

Barbara Lawson, German native

[The German Way](#), German Internet Resources, including religions

